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DoD Probationary Workforce Statement

Feb. 21, 2025

As the Secretary announced yesterday, the Department of Defense is re-evaluating our probationary workforce, consistent with the President's initiative to reform the Federal workforce to maximize efficiency and productivity.

This re-evaluation of probationary employees is being done across government, not just at the Defense Department, but we believe in the goals of the program, and our leaders are carrying out that review carefully and smartly.

We anticipate reducing the Department's civilian workforce by 5-8% to produce efficiencies and refocus the Department on the President's priorities and restoring readiness in the force.

We expect approximately 5,400 probationary workers will be released beginning next week as part of this initial effort, after which we will implement a hiring freeze while we conduct a further analysis of our personnel needs, complying as always with all applicable laws.

As the Secretary made clear, it is simply not in the public interest to retain individuals whose contributions are not mission-critical. Taxpayers deserve to have us take a thorough look at our workforce top-to-bottom to see where we can eliminate redundancies.

As we take these important steps to reshape the workforce to meet the President's priorities, the Department will treat our workers with dignity and respect as it always does. Those who commit themselves to defending our nation deserve nothing less.

- Darin Selnick, Performing the Duties of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

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